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REFORMATION
AND
DESOLATION:

OR,
A Sermon tending to the Discovery of
the Symptomes of a People to whom God
will by no meanes be reconciled.

Preached to the Honourable House of Com-
mons at their late solemn Fast,
Decemb. 22. 1641.

By *Stephen Marshall* B. D. Minister of *Finching-
field* in ESSEX.

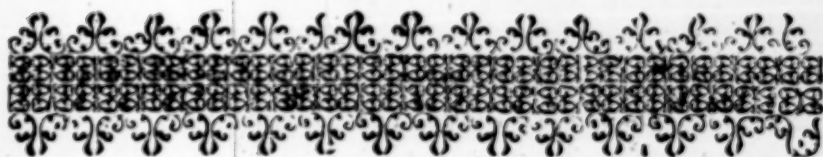
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Zeph. 2. 1, 2.

*Gather your selves together, yea gather together O Nation
not desired, before the decree bring forth.*

LONDON,

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the Brazen Serpent in *Pauls Church-
yard*, 1642.



To the Honourable House of Commons,
now assembled in Parliament.

I*T pleased this Honourable Assembly to require my service in preaching at the late solemn and religious afflicting your soules before the Lord, to which not only my duty but experience of your former acceptance of my endeavours, made me yeeld a ready obedience. But although I knew your goodnesse would beare with that weaknesse which would be discovered in speaking to so grave and judicious an auditory; yet could I not expect to receive so large a testimony, not only of your acceptance, but thanks, as I and my Colleague have done, much lesse that you should so expressely send to have them published; because now what blame shall be cast upon my insufficiency in handling and prosecuting such a subject, must in some sort reflect upon your selves. For my selfe I answer all objections against my sending them abroad, with this, that they are yours, and it is fit for me to yeeld unto your disposing of them.*

For the maine lesson handled, the Lord grant that our seeking him while he may be found, may prevent us from being a further prooffe of it to other Nations, and succeeding generations.

And to this end, the same Lord guide and blesse unto

The Epistle Dedicatory.

us, and reward into your owne bosomes, and your posterities, all the many, long, and unwearied labours which you have undergone, and still continue in for the glory of his name, the reformation of his Church, the honour of his Majesty, the peace and prosperity of the whole Realme. This is so generally desired and sought for at Gods hands, that I hope the God who heareth prayers, will not leave the happinesse imperfect, which he seemes to have prepared by your meanes, nor deprive us of the good which you are working. To his wisdom, protection, mercy, and grace, he leaves you, who is your daily Remembrancer at the Throne of Grace.

STEPHEN MARSHALL.



A SERMON PREACHED
at the late Fast, before the COMMONS
Houle of PARLIAMENT.

2 KINGS 23. 26. Read also Vers. 25.

And like unto him (that is King Iosiah) there was no King before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soule, and with all his might according to all the Law of Moses; neither afterwards arose any like unto him.

Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fiercenesse of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withall.



His King *Iosiah* (Right Honourable and beloved) may most truly be counted, not onely one of the Worthies of the world, but also one of the worlds wonders: There is hardly any thing recorded of him but what is wonderfull, his very birth was wonderfull, he being prophesied of by name about three hundred and fitty yeares before hee was borne: And there-
B

Introdu-
tion.

King. 13 2

Introdu-
ction,

2 Chr 33.

2 Chro.
34.3.

therein fore-promised to doe those great thinges which he effected against Idolaters, and the reliques of Idolatry. And it was as wonderfull to thinke in what a desperate condition, and time of the Church he was borne, in the darkeſt midnight of apoſtaſie, when the ten Tribes were carried away captive, and *Judah* and *Benjamin* onely left, and they (as farre as the eye of man could ſee) wholly and generally fallen from the Lord their God to all manner of Idols and Idolatries; when the very Temple of God was made a denne of Idols; nay, his Altar the onely Altar of *Israel* deſtroied, to make roome for Altars erected to Idols: When the true Church had hardly any viſible being upon the face of the earth; yea I am perſwaded that in the darkeſt times of Antichriſtianity; the true Church of Chriſt was never more inviſible, then it was about that time when *Iofiah* was borne. And it was another wonder, that in ſuch a ſtrong faction as Idolatry then had, that any could poſſibly ſo prevaile in the Court as to give ſuch education to the young Prince: Nor is it leſſe wonderfull that by that time he was but ſixteen years old, hee ſtood out a perfect godly man, undertaking the cauſe of God, and the reformation of Religion, and that with ſuch a perfect heart to make the moſt compleat and abſolute reformation of the Church that ever was wrought by any mortall man ſince God had a Church on earth. But the ſucceſſe of his labours ſeems to me the moſt wonderfull of all the reſt, whether you looke upon the ſucceſſe it had with the people, or the ſucceſſe it had with God.

The ſucceſſe with the people was this, that although at *Iofiahs* firſt appearing as a right Orient, and illuſtrious Starre in a darke night there was hardly any viſible wor-
ſhip

ship or worshipper to bee found; yet hee carried all before him like a torrent, and walked like a man of fire, (as his name signifies the fire of the Lord) and brought the whole Nation so about, that there was scarce ever such a Covenant made as hee procured, and that not by a prevailing party, but the universality of his Kingdome joined with him in it, and continued in it, and held close to it all the time that *Iosiah* lived in the world. Introduⁿ tion. 2 Chr. 2 4
31. 32. 33
This was the successe that hee found among the people.

But now the successe that all this found with God is yet more wonderfull, and this my Text will tell you of, *viz.* That notwithstanding such a rare man was thus wonderfully stirred up, thus miraculously carried on with such a perfect heart, with such an unanimous consent of his people, to set upon the worke of reforming Religion; and did it so as never morrall man did the like before, nor any arose afterward like unto him; yet *notwithstanding all this the Lord turned not away from the fiercenesse of his great wrath, &c.*

And so now you see my Text is a description of the altogether hopelesse and helplesse condition of the Church of the Jewes, though there was a Physitian risen up who had found out the most precious balme that ever was, and faithfully applyed it, yet the hurt of Gods people could receive no cure, but they must die for it. The scope of the Text and parts of it.

And this may be reduced to these two heads.

First, you have their miserable and forlorne estate in these words. (*Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fiercenesse of his great wrath which was kindled against Iudah.*)

Secondly, you have the cause of all this, what it was

Introdu-
tion.

that made God irreconciliably and inexorably set against them in these words : *Because of all the provocations where-with Manasses had provoked him* ; though hee were dead betwene thirty and forty yeares before *Iosiah* ended his dayes, yet his provocations were the cause that God would never bee reconciled to his people, though hee was reconciled to *Manasses* person before hee dyed. I purpose not any exact or large handling of this Text, nor is it possible to hee done in one Sermon : I shall onely cull out such things as are most intended by the holy Ghost, and most futable to the occasion of our meeting.

Observa-
tion from
the con-
nexion.

And first, let us in a few words consider it in relation to the former Verse, and secondly, as it lyes in it selfe. As it stands in relation to the former description made of *Iosiah*, and the high praises which God there bestowes upon him, I thence observe, That *when God raises up any excellent instruments to appear in his cause, they are most graciously accepted with him, though their endeavours should come to nothing* : There shall be glory and honour, and immortality, and eternall life to themselves, though there be indignation, and wrath, tribulation, anguish and woe, upon the people whom they would willingly doe good unto. This you see plainly in this Text, *Iosiah* sets up a building which was instantly throwne downe sticke and stone, yet never man received better wages and greater reward than hee did. God hath raised up many instruments to doe him service who have had admirable successe in their way. *Moses* brought Gods people out of the bondage of Egypt, carried them through a desolate, wastefull, howling wildernesse, and that miraculously for forty yeares together : *Ioshua* gave them the possession

Deut. 29.

5.
Josh. 23. 4.
5.

possession of the promised land, and left them in it in peace. *David* subdued all their enemies about them, untill they were all put under the soles of their feet, leaving them neither adversary nor evill occurrents. *Solomon* built Gods Temple, and established the Church in the purity of Gods Worship and Ordinances, and the Common-wealth with admirable peace and prosperity; yet, not any of these more magnified by the Lord than *Iosiah*, whose work came to nothing. This is my first observation; and it hath these two branches; first it implies that the endeavours of rare Instruments may come to nothing, that men may bee stirred up with admirable spirits to attempt great things for God, and yet their work miscarry.

King. 53.4

In two branches;

Secondly, that though their work come to nothing, yet themselves shall be highly magnified with the Lord.

I could easily give abundant testimonies and instances of such whom God hath raised up with extraordinary spirits; men that wee might think had been fit to carry the world before them who have effected little or nothing: *Elias* for one, a man (as it were) made of fire, who at one time called a Parliament of the King, and all the Heads of Israel together, convinced them of their halting between God and Baal, and wrought so at the present, that all the people cryed out the Lord is God, and seemed to have their hearts brought back again to the Lord their God; and likewise that eight hundred Idolatrous Priests and false Prophets were put to the sword; yet the very next day, he was faine to run away to save his life, undertaking a journey of forty dayes to keepe himselfe from the fury of *Iezabel*. *Jeremy* was another rare man, one of the most zealous Instruments

1. Branch;
The endeavours of rare instruments may come to nothing.2. King. 18
19.

that ever God employed ; inſomuch that he ſaid of him-
 Jer. 15. 10. ſelfe that he was a man of contention to all the earth, and
 Jer. 20. 9. Gods word was in him like fire in his bones which hee
 could not keep in ; yet this man in his almoſt forty years
 preaching , could neither prevaile with King nor Prin-
 ces, Prophets. Priests, nor people , all grew worſe and
 worſe, and himſelfe in the end was carried away by a re-
 bellious company into that accuſed land of Egypt, and
 there died.

And it hath beene often obſerved , that the Lord hath
 ſeene it fit for reaſons beſt knowne to himſelfe , to let a-
 bundance of the Worthies whom he hath employed even
 (ſo far as men could judge) to periſh in the worke he hath
 ſet them about.

But ſecondly , what ever their ſucceſſe hath beene a-
 mongſt men, they have been never a whit leſſe regarded ,
 or rewarded by the Lord ; for this the Scripture is plaine,
 Eſay 49. 5. There the Prophet in Chriſts name , and
 in his owne name , and in the name of all Gods inſtru-
 ments, concludes, *That though they ſpend their ſtrength for
 nought , and in vaine ; yet ſurely their worke is with the
 Lord, and though the people be not gathered, yet they ſhall be
 glorious in the eyes of the Lord , and their God will bee their
 ſtrength.* And Paul ſaith, 2 Cor. 2. 15. *We are a ſweet ſa-
 vour to God in them that periſh , as well as in them that are
 ſaved.*

And there is plaine reaſon for it, becauſe ſincere endea-
 vours to doe Gods ſervice is our whole worke , but the
 ſucceſſe of theſe endeavours is Gods worke. Now the
 Lord hath tied himſelfe in his covenant to reward every
 man according to his owne worke , and not according to
 the worke of another : God never required at the hands
 of

See to this
 purpoſe,
 Matth. 23.
 34. 37.
 Act. 7. 53.
 Heb. 11.
 37. 38.
 Second
 Branch.
 Yet them-
 ſelves
 highly
 magnified
 and re-
 warded by
 God.

of any Minister to save soules ; or at the hand of any Magistrate to preserve a Nation ; of any husbandman to produce a crop out of the ground , &c. this belongs only to himselfe ; he only requires at their hands to be his servants , to obey his will , wherein if they be faithfull , they shall not misse of their reward. God compares Kings and Princes , and other of his servants , to nursing fathers , and nursing mothers : Now you that are persons of quality , if you put forth a childe to nurse , and can have perfect information that the nurse loves , attends , suckles your childe , and performes all the duties belonging to a nursing mother ; this nurse , I say , is by you esteemed and rewarded , whether the childe live or die : yea it may be the more when the childe dies , because you see her afflicted in losing your childe which she would gladly have enjoyed.

Esay 49.
2.2.
1.Thef.2.7

I doe but name this , you are wise to apply it to your selves , you (Right honourable and beloved) are employed in great services , God hath raised you up to attempt glorious things for his name , for the purging of his house , and the establishing of this great people in the peace of the *Gospel* : how farre God will use any of you , I cannot tell ; and how farre this unworthy Nation will acknowledge your indefatigable paines , I cannot tell ; as yet you have the prayers and blessings of all sorts of people , high and low , rich and poore , that wish well to Sion. But however goe on , yee Worthies of the Lord , with sincere hearts to doe what God requires at your hands ; and whether this Nation be gathered or not , you shall be *glorious in the eyes of God , and the Lord will be your strength*. *Iosiah* you see had the greatest commendation of all others , notwithstanding

Applicati-
on to the
Parlia-
ment.

standing the Lord turned not from his fierce wrath: and this is all I have to say from the connexion of the words, that God magnified *Iosiah*, though his work came to nothing.

Now let us consider them in themselves, where I shall not need before so grave and intelligent Assembly, to waste the time in analysing or giving the grammaticall interpretation of so plaine and easie a Text, I shall only take up three doctrinall observations (which you will see to lie clearly in the words) and handle them as the Lord shall please to enable me, and the time permit; whereof the first is:

Doct. 1. *That Gods wrath is a most fearfull and dreadfull thing when it is once thoroughly kindled:*

Doct. 2. The second and maine doctrine is, *That the sins of a Church and people may come to that height, and Gods wrath may be kindled to that heat, notwithstanding their reformation, God will inexorably goe onto a desolation.* Notwithstanding all that *Iosiah* did, the Lord turned not from his fierce wrath.

Doct. 3. Therthird is, this being done for *Manassehs* provocations, I observe, *That the sins of one generation may be the ground and cause of the destruction and ruine of the succeeding generation.* The abominations that *Manasses* committed and commanded in his time, were the cause why God was unappeasably bent to the destruction of the generation that lived after him.

First Do-
ctrine
from the
Text, that
the wrath
of God is
exceeding
fierce.

I begin with the first, *That the wrath of God, when it is greatly kindled, is extreme fierce,* or it is a most dreadfull thing to bee under Gods wrath when it is once kindled. Mark how the words here are *eg'd*, how wonderfully emphaticall, how dreadfully expressed. God

God turned not from the *fiercenesse* of his *great wrath*, wherewith his *anger* was *kindled*. David saith, if his *wrath* be kindled but a *little*, blessed are they that trust in him, implying their misery that be under it; but when there is the *fiercenesse* of his *great wrath*, they are miserable *in deed* who are under that. Psal. 2.

In clearing of this, I shall first briefly discusse two or three questions, and then endeavour (as the Lord shall help me) to set it home to you in an application. Explain it.

What the wrath of God is? what is the wrath of God, of which the Scripture speaks so often, and such dreadful things? Quest. 1.
What the
wrath of
God is.

In men we use to say, that anger or wrath is *perturbatio concitati animi*, the perturbation of a troubled spirit; but in God it is *tranquilla constitutio iusti supplicii*, a calme and quiet appointment of just punishment. Plainly, *wrath* or *anger* in God is never attributed to him, in regard of any *troublesome passion*, or *affection*; but only in respect of the *effect*. I say, that wrath or anger is attributed to God, not *secundum perturbationis affectum*, but *secundum ultionis effectum*. In a word then, Gods wrath is nothing but his *revenging justice*; which justice of God, as it *simply burnes* against sinne, the Scripture calls his *anger*: when it doth more fiercely *exandescere*, or sparkle out, it is called his *wrath*: the same *justice*, when it pronounceth *sentence*, is called his *judgement*; when it is brought into *execution*, it is called his *vengeance*: so that *wrath*, *anger*, *judgement*, and *vengeance* in God are all *one*: Gods *wrath* is his *revenging justice*, and when I say, his wrath (when greatly kindled) is exceeding fierce, I meane it is a dreadful, horrid, and fearefull thing to fall

Ans.

C

under

The fier-
cenesse of
Gods wrath

Quest. 2.

Answer.

Psal. 97. 11

The fier-
cenesse of it

illustrated

from di-

vers com-

passions.

under the dint of Gods revenging justice.

How may the fiercenesse of Gods wrath appeare?

I answer briefly, it is impossible for any tongue to set it forth. *Moses* tells us, *no man knowes the power of Gods wrath*: God is not easily provoked, hee is slow to wrath: his wrath is as a great Bell long raising, but when it is once up, makes such a dreadfull sound, as no tongue can expresse. Many a poore soule feesles a great deale of it, whole Nations have laine under it; but never was any creature able to say what the power of Gods fierce *wrath* is. But if you will give your reverent attention one quarter of an houre, I shall (God willing) out of the holy Scriptures open something, which may in some degree make you conceive, how fearfull the *wrath* of God is, when it is once *kindled*. And doe not think that I shall speak of what concerns strangers, and not your selves; for I greatly feare, that before we part it will be too evident, that this fierce wrath is kindled against some of our owne soules who are here present. Indeed your calling and meeting this day for *humiliation*, *fasting*, and *prayer* seemes to tell all the world, that you beleve that Gods wrath is kindled; and therefore being kindled, it is fit you should know what kinde of *flame* it is.

First, Consider by what dreadfull comparisons the holy Ghost useth to set out the *fiercenesse* of Gods wrath. As the *roaring* of a *Lyon*: the Lyon hath roared, who will not tremble? the Lord hath uttered his voice, who will not feare? To a *terrible earth-quake*, that makes the foundation of the hills to quake and tremble. But most usually it is set out by *devouring fire*, the most terrible of all the creatures which Gods hand hath made:

Ancs 3. 4.

Psal. 18.

7. 8.

made+and mark what *kind of fire* it is: Sometimes it is compared to a *shower of fire*; God raines downe upon the *wicked fire and brimstone and horrible tempest*: raining downe of snares, and fire, and brimstone, is a *horrible tempest* indeed. If any morrall man had stood with *Abraham*, and scene the Lord raining downe flakes of fire and brimstone upon *Sodom and Gomorrah*, hee would have thought it an horrible tempest. Yea it is compared to a *lake or river of fire*, *Esaï. 30. ult.* The breath of the Lord (speaking of *Tophet*) like a *river of fire and brimstone kindles it*. Imagine the anger of the Lord thus set out, as if from Gods *nostrils*, and out of his *mouth* should come huge *lakes or floods* of fire and brimstone, streaming out upon the people with whom hee is angry: What dreadfull things are these? Yet further, Gods wrath is set out to bee such a fire as is altogether *irresistible*; so that the poore creatures on whom it falls, cannot possibly stand before it: and therefore usually when God is said to arise in *wrath* and *fury*, the people, that bee the vessels of this wrath, are said to bee *wax*, and *straw*, and *stubble*, *dry leaves*, and *rotten hedges*; and what are these to stand before huge stormes and floods, lakes of fire and brimstone?

And as it is *irresistible*, so it is *intolerable*; which is usually set out by *weeping* and *wailing*, and *gnashing of teeth*.

And lastly, Such a fire, when once thoroughly kindled, can *never be quenched*. There bee two expressions (among many others) in the Scripture, which bee very dreadfull, to this purpose: The one is *Deuter. 32. 26.* Where the Lord saith, that a *fire is kindled in his anger*; and mark what a fire it is, *it shall burne to the lowest hell*,

The fierce
resse of
Gods wrath

Plal. 11. 6

Gen. 19. 24

The fierce
nelle of
Gods wrath

and shall consume the earth with her encrease, and set on fire the foundations of the Mountaines. Such a fire as when once kindled burnes up Mountaines, earth, and world, and all, and never rests till it abide in hell, where there is no bottome, and there it burnes for ever. The other is in *Nahum* 1. where Gods fury and fierce anger is compared to fire which throwes down rocks, licks up the sea, burnes up the forrests, melis and burnes the earth and world, and all that dwells therein. Certainly, that must needs be a dreadfull and horrid thing which the Spirit of God thus describes.

2
By the ef-
fects of it.

Secondly, Consider some of the effects of Gods *wrath*, and then you will conceive in some measure what it is. The throwing of many millions of Angels out of heaven into the lowest hell, was nothing but the effect of Gods *wrath*. The opening the flood-gate of all sin and misery upon all mankind, was nothing but an effect of Gods *wrath*. The deluge that over-whelmed all the world, all the plagues of *Egypt*, burning of *Sodom*, the earths opening and swallowing up *Korah* and his company, all the famine, pestilence, blood, that ever the world lay under, are but so many effects of Gods *wrath*. Nay, the dreadfull appearance at the last day, when the *Potentates* and *Princes* of the world will bee humble Suiters to the hills and mountaines to fall on them, will bee nothing but an effect of the Lords comming in *wrath*, to render vengeance to his enemies. Yea, to be thrown to all eternity into the pit of hell, into utter darknesse, into the fire that never is quenched, and among wormes that shall never cease gnawing, all these are nothing but to be under the *wrath* of God. But above all these, and if ten thousand more could bee named, that

that one effect of it, is the Lords powring out his viall of his revenging justice upon the body and soule of our blessed Lord and Saviour Iesus Christ, is most able to in forme us, how great and fierce the wrath of God is : that when he had but one Son who was his fellow (as the Prophet saith, *Awake sword, and smite the man that is my fellow;*) yet this revenging justice being powred out upon him, made him (who in his person was no other than God himself, yet in his humane nature) when this Cup was put into his hand, yea the very first taste of it, made him sweat drops of blood trickling down to the ground, in a cold winters night; and when he had drunk it off, it made him cry out in the anguish of his soule, *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* These effects may helpe us to conceive what a dreadfull thing it is to wrefle with the wrath of God.

The fierceneſſe of Gods wrath

Zach. 13. 7.

Luk. 22. 44

But thirdly, Were I able to open the thing it selfe, and let you see it in the causes, you would instantly conclude, that it is beyond all apprehension. Conceive it thus, The revenging justice of God is Gods opposing himselfe against the creature; When God takes his creature into his hand, and by his almighty power upholds the being of it, that it may feele what the Lord Jehovah can doe upon it, and against it. This no living creature can conceive. When God hath only hid himselfe from his dearest friends, this very hiding of himselfe hath been so dreadfull, that it hath made them goe roaring all the day long, dried up their moisture, made their lives uncomfortable, and a burden to themselves, turned all other comforts into gall and worm-wood. Now if onely an Eclipse of his loving countenance bee thus intolerable, what is it for God to fall upon a creature

From the cause of it

The fierc-
ness of
Gods wrath

ture as his enemy? When a poore worme must not on-
ly stand under the weight of a huge rock falling upon it,
but of an almighty God. You that have large thoughts
may now easily conceive what a fearefull thing the
wrath of God is.

Quest 3.

Who are
the ob-
jects of
this wrath
of God.

Ans.

The third Question is; *Against whom* is this wrath
of God thus kindled?

I Answer; First, Gods wrath may be kindled *mildly*
and *gently* against his owne *deare children*, when they
walke not faithfully in his Covenant, when they lay
aside their filiall obedience, when they give occasion
to his enemies to blaspheme his Name: though hee
will not suffer all his indignation to arise, yet his fa-
therly displeasure may bee kindled against them. And
even this fatherly wrath, this gentle wrath, (if it bee
not a contradiction to call it so) these small drops of
his displeasure, are more unsupportable to them than
all the miseries of the world: Yea, they could more
willingly submit to the torments in hell (provided
that Gods countenance did but shine upon them) than
to undergoe that which this wrath of God sometimes
distills upon them: And yet all this while wee may tru-
ly say of them, they are children *under wrath*, but not
the children *of wrath*; not the people of his wrath, not
the vessels of his wrath.

But if you will know, Secondly, What are the peo-
ple against whom God hath indignation for ever; the
Scripture tells it you in this expresseion ordinarily, they
are the *children of Belial*; so they are usually called in
the Old Testament; that is, such as will not beare
Gods yoke; master-lesse children, yoke-lesse children:
Col. 3. 6. And in the New Testament, they are called *children of*
disobedience;

disobedience; as the Apostle, *For which things sake the wrath of God commeth on the children of disobedience.* *The fierceness of Gods wrath*

Now who these children of *Belial*, and of disobedience are, I must a little explaine to you, and then the Application will bee easie. I say therefore that these children that will not carry the yoke, are, First, *all unbelievers*. I doe not meane *Negative unbelievers*, that is, those that doe not beleeve in Christ, because they never heard of him; but *Positive unbelievers*, who have had the glorious light of the Gospel shining to them, to whom the *Lord Iesus* hath been freely offered, as a Saviour to deliver them from wrath to come; and yet they refuse to come in, and to accept of him, *as hee offers himselfe in his Gospel*; because they doe not like to take him upon such hard termes: you may be sure the wrath of God rests upon these men. Turne but to *Iohn 3. ult.* *Hee that beleeves in Christ shall be saved*, hee that beleeves not is a damned man: and how? *the wrath of God abides on him*. Mark that expression, *abides on him*: The wrath of God takes up, as it were, his habitation in an unbeliever. So that what Gods grace sometimes said of *Solomons Temple*, *Here will I dwell for I have a delight in it*: So the wrath of God seemes to say of an unbeliever, *Here I will dwell, here I will abide for ever.*

Secondly, The children of disobedience and sonnes of *Belial*, are such, whose lives and conversations are contrary to the rules of the Gospel; who as they will not take *Christ* to be their portion by faith, so they will not take *Christs word* in the Gospel to be their guide; but they will live indeed without all yoke, doing what is good in their owne eyes; these are the sonnes of *Belial*. You may see a notable description of them in the prophesie of *Zacharie, ch. 7. v. 8.* where the wilfull disobedience,

The fierce-
nesse of
Gods wrath

obedience, obstinate stubbornnesse and intractablenesse is expressed by divers similitudes, all tending to the same purpose. *They refuse to hearken, stop their eares,* as not willing to hear Gods counsel, they pull'd away the shoulder, as an Oxe or Bullock that shrinks back from the yoke, or as one that should carry a burthen, pulls away his shoulder, when he should take it, and lets it fall: so these deale with the easie yoke, and the light burthen of Gods commandements. Yea, they make their hearts as an *Adamant Stone*; there is in them a stiffe and wilfull resolution to sin, whereby their hearts are as intractable to any goodnesse, as the hardest sort of stones, Flints, or Diamonds are to be wrought by the toole into any fashion we desire: when you have said all you can against their wantonnesse, uncleannesse, prophannesse, pride, covetousness, &c. you prevaile no more than when an hammer strikes upon an anvile: Their hearts can easily reject all yee cannot beat a splinter off from them: then immediately it followes in the next verse, *Therefore there came a great wrath from the Lord of Hostes.* These are the sons of *Belial*, these are the vessels of Gods wrath.

Applicat.
To praise
God for
delive-
rance
from it,

Now to apply this to our selves, it might first teach all who are reconciled to God by Christ, what infinite cause they have every day of their life, to blesse that grace of God, which hath not appointed them unto wrath, but by the blood of his own sonne, hath delivered them from wrath to come, and provided for them everlasting glory and happinesse.

2
Not to
envie the
prosperity
of such as
are under
it.

Secondly, it may likewise teach all that feare God never to envie the prosperous estate of any child of *Belial*, though waters of a full cup be wrung out for them, though they swim in wealth and honour, and pomp in this world, and have all their hearts can desire,

fire, and in the meane time a ccount it their glory that they carry not the Lords yoak, never *envie their lot*; If any here knew of half a score good fellowes set at a banquet of wine, furnished with all the helps of mirth and jollity, if hee knew withall, that the shot to be payd for it, must be every mans *heart blood*, he would be loath to be one of the pack with them. I confesse it is hard not to be troubled at the prosperity of wicked men: even *David* and *Jeremy* found it a hard thing not to envie their prosperity. But stay till the shot be payd, enquire how able they will be to undergoe the wrath of God, enter into the *Sanctuary*, *understand their end*, and thy envie will bee at an end, but these I intended not to insist upon.

*The fierce-
nesse of
Gods wrath*

*Psal. 73. 3.
Ier 12. 1.*

There is one only proper use for the present occasion and that is this; you are met this day together to *Fast* and *Pray* and *mourne* before the *Lord*; and (as I touched before) *hereby* you acknowledge that the wrath of God is kindled, and that your selves are called to take a course to turn away Gods wrath: and I verily believe this is the very end you aymed at, in calling us the unworthy Ministers of Christ to your help this day, that wee might bee assistant to you in whatever might turn away the wrath of God from you. Now two things were at large pressed upon you in the morning, as well befitting the work of this day. The one was to *rent*, and *break*, and *teare* every one of your *hearts* in the *sense* of your *sins*, kindly and thoroughly to humble you in the sight of God. The other was to provoke you to a *strong resolution* to leave the waies of sin in time to come.

3
To help
forward
our repen-
tance.

In which two things, *humiliation* and *Reformation*, stands the very life of unfained repentance, and the spirituall part of a Religious Fast; without which all our ab-

D

stinence

The fierce-
nesse of
Gods wrath

In humili-
ation for
sin, which
hath kind-
led it.

stinence and sackcloth, and bodily exercises in watch-
ing, hearing, &c. are meere abominations in the sight
of God. I rejoyce that you had these things set so
home in the morning, some of my work being thereby
spared. But the bringing this lesson home, if God set
it on to your hearts, may help to fasten the counsell
given you in the morning, *as a naye in a sure place.*
I shall endeavour to further your humiliation and re-
formation from the meditation of the fearfulnesse and
dreadfulnesse of the wrath of God.

I must therefore entreat you all, (Honourable and
beloved) since you have vouchsafed to call for the la-
bour of a poor man to help you, let mee be as free with
you, as if you were so many meane people: my duty this
day is to doe that which *Jeremy* did: *God* calls him in
a *mourning time*, and saith, goe to the *King* and *Queen*,
and say *come yee down*, sit in the dust, *humble your selves*:
So I say to you, comedown, forget that any of you
are *Earles* or *Lords*, *Knights*, or *Gentlemen*, lay for a
while these thoughts aside; and give mee leave to ask
you two or three Questions, and be so faithfull to your
own soules as to think how you can answer them be-
fore the Lord. Are yee not children of *Belial*? (that is
the very thing which you must answer in your own
bosome) *that is*, are there not amongst you such as
refuse to carry the *yoak* of *Christ*? who will not take
Christ to be your Saviour as he offers himselfe to you
in his Gospel? you will have him upon other termes
than to make him your *King*, *Prophet*, and *Priest*; you
would have him to deliver you from hell, but hee shall
not bee your Lord, so, as for you to resigne up your
selves to him, as a dutifull wife resignes up her selfe to
her husband. And for your *conversations*, you will doe
what

what is good in your own sight; if you have a minde <sup>The fierc-
nesse of
Gods wrath</sup> to sweare you will sweare; you will lie, bee uncleane, dissemble, these things please you well and you will doe them. Now hear what I say, what thy outward quality or condition is I know not: but this I know, persons of your quality do not use much to be scared; men are affraid to speak any thing that may make you tremble: but you must be scared, or we shall doe no good to you. You are now called to have your hearts rent, I have that to say, might rent the very cawle of your heart, even this, oh thou miserable and wretched worme! *great is the wrath of God that is kindled against thee.* This terrible Lyon roares against thee, a dreadfull fire is kindled, a horrible tempest is ready to fall upon thy head, showers and floods of fire and brimstone are even ready to be powred out upon thee: how art thou able to live with everlasting burnings? how wilt thou dwell with devouring fire? Thou that art crushed before a moth, *how can thy heart endure, or thy hands be strong in the day that God shall deale with thee?* Thou that dar'st not think of lying one day upon a wrack, that canst not endure for two or three dayes to be wrung with the cholick, that art not able to beare the thoughts of lying under the tearing of a Quartane Ague from Michaelmas to Easter; how wilt thou bee able to stand under the fall of such a huge rock as the wrath of the Almighty God? which every moment is ready to break downe upon thee. How wilt thou doe when these rivers of fire and brimstone shall be powred out upon thee? and thou no more able to stand before them, than a few dry leaves are able to resist the huge breaking in of many waters? Oh beloved, would you with due care apply these things to your own hearts, and present them to your souls as things present,

The fierce
venge of
Gods wrath

how would they bring down the most stubborn spirit !
how would they help to *break* the *hardest* of your hearts
before the Lord !

How this
may be
done.

Ezek. 12.
27.

But there are two things which keep most people from being affected with them. The first is, These things are looked upon as things *a farre off* : Now it is a rule in *Opticks*, That things *a farre off*, though they be *marvellous great*, yet seeme *very little* : a Starre that is bigger than all the earth, seemes no bigger than a candle being many miles distant from us. So while men look at the wrath of God, as *they* did at the Prophets Vision, *The Vision that he sees is for many dayes to come, and he prophesies of the times that are farre off* : And put the evill day from them : All these threatnings are but light matters. Secondly, it fares with most men in this point, as with some men that have shrewish wives ; though their businesse lie within doors, yet they have no heart to be there for feare of chiding : So though it be the most necessary work to think of these things ; yet because their unquiet consciences upon the least serious meditation, are ready to gnaw and teare them, and make them sleep uncomfortably, they labour to drive off the thought of this thing as *a farre as they can*, and will not think of Gods wrath due to sinne, from yeeres end to yeeres end. Whereas if men would bring it in *rem praesentem*, and keep their eyes open to behold it, as a thing which *unavoidably* will come upon them, how admirably would it work upon mens hearts !

To this end, let me tell you a story which I have often read to this purpose. It is reported of a certaine *Christian King of Hungary*, who being on a time *marvellous sad and heavie*, his brother that was a resolute Courtier would needs know what he ailed ; Oh brother,
(saith

(saith he,) I have been a great sinner against God, and I know not how I shall appeare before him, when he comes to judgment: These are (saith his brother) melancholy thoughts, and makes a toy of them, as Gallants use to doe: The *King* replies nothing for the present; but the *custome* of that Countrey was, that if the Executioner of justice came and sounded a Trumpet before, any mans doore, the man was presently to be led to execution: the King in the dead time of the night sends his Deaths-man, and causeth him to sound his Trumpet before his brothers doore, who hearing and seeing the messenger of death, springs in pale and trembling into his brothers presence, and beseeches the King to let him know wherein hee had offended. O Brother, replies the King, thou hast loved me, and never offended me, and is the sight of my Executioner so dreadfull to thee; and shall not I, so great a sinner, feare to be brought to judgment before Jesus Christ? If we would thus suppose with *Hierom*, that we heard this Trumpet sounding, *Arise ye dead, and come to judgment*, it would work to the purpose. O set your selves therefore in Gods presence, and behold the Lord shaking his lap, (as *Nehe-miah* when hee shook his lap, and said, so God shake out every man from his house:) Thus will I shake into eternall destruction all the children of *Belial*, and then evidence be brought in against thee, (how great soever thou art amongst men) that thou hast a huge pile of sin heaped up against God, and still hast gone on to adde drunkenesse to thirst, opposing God, his wayes, and his cause, refusing grace offered freely. not willing to be at peace with God, while thou hast any meanes to fight against him: when all these things shall be laid open before thee, and (as thy iust reward).

The fierce-
ness of
Gods wrath

Neh. 5. 13.

The fierce-
ness of
Gods wrath

Raro ante-
cedentem
scelus sum
deservit
pede pana
claudo,
Horace.

2
For Re-
formation.

Meditati-
on of
wrath how
it may
promote
it.
Esay 33.
14.

God strike thee a full blow, and sinke thee to the bot-
tome of hell, where thou shalt wish that thou hadst
been a toad, or (as one in desperation sometimes
wished) that thou mightst live there a thousand yeers,
so thou mightst have any hope in the end, that the
wrath of God might cease towards thee. Would not
these things then work upon thee? Couldst thou then
passe such a day as this, without trembling? Couldst
thou be before the Lord, and not have thy heart rent
and torn? Be perswaded therefore once more to bring
it home to thy own soule, and say, as he said of his
green fig, this grew in *Carthage* yesterday: This wrath,
this sea of misery may break in upon me the next mo-
ment: I am yet joviall and merry, but Gods venge-
ance with woollen feet follows me close at the back,
and will overtake me; if I cannot mourn at the hea-
ring of wrath, I must burn at the feeling of it. The
good Lord melt our hearts with the feare of these
things, lest we be swallowed up in them.

And then for the *second part*, for your *Reformation*,
would the Lord make this day, a day of *Reformation* to
this honourable Assembly, what glorious things would
be done by you! Now what more effectuall motive, what
Furies whip would more restraine from the practise
of sin, or more drive to seek a shelter under the wing of
Christ, and to get into the *safe condition* of the servants
of God, than the beholding of this *devouring fire*,
these everlasting burnings, which sinfull men will never
be able to abide? I know such is the depravation of
mans nature, that if there were any possibility of
avoiding Gods wrath without leaving their sinnes,
many men would resolve with that wicked *Cardinall*
not to leave their part in *Paris*, for their part in *Paradise*:

And

And with that *noble man* (which *Luther* speaks of) The fierce-
ness of
Gods wrath who professed, that if this life of going from whore-house to whore-house might last ever, hee would not envie any mans going to heaven. But this will not last; *There is great wrath prepared for the workers of iniquity.* And therefore my humble request is, that if any of you finde your hearts unwilling to submit to that godly counsell, given you in the morning, of turning to God, doe but think what your finnes, which you *prize* so much, will *cost* you. They say the Pope hath a book called *Taxa camera Apostolica*, wherein men may know the *rate* of any sinne; upon what termes a man may keep a whore, be a Sodomite, or murder his Father, &c. But here is a *rate-book*, where any of you may know what a beloved sinne will *cost* you; not a farthing token lesse, than to lie under the devouring fire of Gods wrath to all eternity. Porters will try their burthens upon their shoulders before they engage themselves to carry it, doe thou so. It is reported of Master *Bilney* when he thought he should be burnt, he would put his finger into the candle to see how he could endure burning, doe thou often so; goe often alone and say, here is a sinne marvellous pleasant, such a sinne gaines me thus much every yeere, but there is wrath to come: And therefore as *Elihu* said to *Iob*, *Because there is* Iob 36.18. *wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroak; a great ransom cannot deliver thee, hee will not esteeme thy riches, no not gold, nor all the forces of strength.* 4
Fourthly and lastly, there is one use peculiar to you To the
Parlia-
ment, o
make it
their great
care to pa-
cific it. that be our *Noble Sennators*, the *Lords and Commons* gathered in *Parliament*: wee know your care is for our good, but this I humbly propound to you, you will never

The fierce-
nesse of
Gods wrath

never doe us good, if *Gods wrath* bee not taken away from us: were you so many *Gamaliels*, so many *Hemans*, so many *Solomons*, so many *Angels* gathered together, and all of one heart to study *Englands* good; you can doe *England* no good, if *Gods wrath*, which is kindled against it, be not pacified. And therefore let your great study bee both to finde out what hath kindled *Gods wrath* against us, and what may remove it from us: of which I shall bee able to give you further knowledge in the next and maine lesson to which now I passe, viz.

Doct. 2;
In reformation
God may
goe on to
desolation

That the sins of a people may come to that passe, and *Gods wrath* may bee kindled to that heighth, that notwithstanding their reformation, God will goe on to a desolation. In handling whereof I shall (the Lord helping mee) discusse these three things. First, I shall open the thing in *Thesis*, clear the conclusion, and see if I can make you understand it. Secondly, enquire in *hypothesis*, whether it concerne us or not; whether our Nation, Church, or State, may bee thought to be in any danger of it. And thirdly, I shall endeavour to make some uses which may bee fitting for such an Assembly as this is.

For clearing the conclusion, I shall endeavour these three things. First, I will demonstrate the truth of it. Secondly, I will enquire whether the signes of it may be known, and how farre they may be known: Whether the Lord hath left any foot-steps or rules for us to prognosticate by, and so to judge when a people is come to that passe: And if so, then, Thirdly, what those tokens are: And I shall endeavour to speak plainly and freely of them all.

For

For the truth of it, were there no other Instance to be found in any other story, but this in my Text, it were sufficient to prove that such a thing may bee. That which hath been already, may bee so againe. *Iosiah*, we see, wrought such a Reformation, that the whole Kingdome did; all his dayes, follow the Lord; and notwithstanding all this, God turned not from his fierce wrath; but went on to destroy them. The Lord threatens else-where that he would doe it, *Zeph. 2. 1, 2.* Gather your selves together before the decree bring forth, before the day passe as the chaffe, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you: As if he should have said, The decree is not yet come forth; but if once it bring forth, it will be too late for you to seek for mercy. There be other examples (though not so full as this) sufficient to prove this truth: As *Nineveh* for one: The Lord sent the Prophet *Jonah* to preach repentance or destruction to them; and you know it is said, The King laid aside his Crown, and called them all to repentance; and repent they did; and God saw their works, and for a while forbore that City; and yet the judgement of most Interpreters is, that within forty years after, the City was destroyed, even in the same age wherein the Reformation was made.

That Instance of the *Jewes* is most remarkable, in our Saviour Christs time: *John Baptist* came before him, and turned the hearts of the parents to the children, and the children to the parents; made ready a people prepared for the Lord; there went out to him *Ierusalem* and all *Iudea*, and all the region about *Jordan*, and were baptized of him, confessing their sins. And Christ had so many followers, that the Scribes and Pharisees said, all the world went after him; that is, the body of their Nation. And the Apostles converted so many, that they said to *Paul*, that

E

there

God may
go on to
desolation.

Proved by
Scripture.
2 Chro. 34

Jonah 3.

Ag. 21 208

Notwith-
standing
Reformati-
on.

there were many *myriads*, many ten thousands of *Jewes* that beleeve, who are all zealous. yet notwithstanding, in that very age, wherein the Gospel wrought thus effectually among them, the wrath of God came upon that Nation to the utmost, and scattered them over all the world.

It is likewise recorded of the *Romane Empire*, which for a matter of fixe or seven hundred yeares had been a dreadfull enemy to the Kingdome of the Lord, first against the Church of the Jewes, and afterwards against the Christians (while it was unconverted; in *Constantines* time the Empire turned to Christianity, and in the very first age of the *Empires Christianity*, came the destruction and dissolution of it. So that there is a truth in it, that Gods wrath may be so far kindled, that he will accept of no attonement, but will inexorably proceed to desolation.

That this
may be
known.

The second Question is, Whether this may be known; whether we may possibly find out any direction, whereby to iudge of Gods purpose of thus comming against a people. *Answ.* And for that, I confesse, a great many men, especially such as are not willing to have any dangerous truth preached to them, doe thinke that all preaching and study, in such points as these, is of no more certainty, than the iudgement of *judiciall Astrology*: Tell them of wrath to come, or desolation of Churches, or destruction of Common-wealths; they look on such as shall tell them of these things, as upon a company of *ignorant* people, who will be of their *Authors faith*; or esteeme them as *proud men*, who would be thought to have more acquaintance with Gods secrets than their neighbours, and therefore they must adventure upon such high points; or at best, conceive them to be *sullen, discontented, melancholick people*, who look on every

every thing with black spectacles; but in the meane time themselves will never be perswaded, that any can give them rules of directions to judge in this kind: But you are wise: and if you please to take two or three places of Scripture into your serious thoughts, you will conclude quickly, that this is a point may be known: The one is *Ie. em. 8. 7.* where the Lord blames the stupidity of the people, that whereas *the Stork in the heavens knowes her appointed times; and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the times of their comming; but his people would not know the judgements of the Lord:* arguing them to bee more silly and simply than the very birds and fowles, who could observe what seasons were fit or unfit for their staying or removing in such or such a Countrey; and Gods people remained ignorant of the seasons of Gods approaching judgements. Another place you shall find *Hof. 7. 9.* where the Lord saith of *Ephraim*, that is, the ten Tribes, *gray haire are scattered here and there upon him, yet hee knowes it not:* The meaning, plainly, is this; That as gray hairs are remembrances, and plain tokens of declining old age comming upon men; so there were symptomes and tokens of *Ephraims* ruine comming upon him, and yet he would take no notice of it. Our blessed Saviour also in *Mat. 16. v. 1, 2, 3.* tells his hearers, that *they could make Almanacks for weather, and discerne the face of the skie, and yet could not discerne the signes of the times,* (implying that Prognostications might also bee made, if men would study the right way) whereby they might know what God intends to doe with a people. So then, there is one step gained, that *something* may be known of Gods approaching judgements.

God may go
on to deso-
lation.

E 2

But

Notwith-
standing
Reforma-
tion.

And how
far it may
be known.

But that I may not deliver any thing but what you shall have a full suffrage for, I adde in the next place, and confesse, that because all seasons are in Gods hands, and all people under his absolute prerogative; so that, if hee pleaseth, hee may destroy a Nation for *one sinne*; and againe, if hee pleaseth, hee can exercise *so much mercy*, that *no sinnes* of a people can set any bounds or limits thereunto; nothing but his owne holy will setting limits to his patience, long-suffering and mercy; and because also God doth alwayes beare such a tender regard to his *owne children*, that where-ever they live, hee doth often for their sakes (as it were) *reverse* his sentence of desolation. In regard of these things and some others which might bee suggested, I thinke I may say, no mortall man can possibly determine when the *precise time* of this or that Nations utter ruine is certainly come. What Christ said of the day of Judgement, may fitly bee applyed here, *the very day and houre* of the last Judgement *no man knowes*, but only the Father, and the Sonne, to whom it is revealed from the Father, and that also since his Resurrection; but yet there bee signes whereby wee may know the approaching of that day: So wee may say of this, though wee cannot know the very time of a Nations desolation; yet wee may know when the ruine of it comes neere at hand. And what learned men say of them, who have studied for the *Philosophers stone*, though they could never finde out the *Elixar*; yet in their search after it they have found out *many excellent things*, admirably usefull for mankind: so in this search if wee cannot determine that such a Nation will infallibly

Ps. 106. 23

Mat. 24. 36

fallibly bee ruined, yet wee may certainly finde such things as thereby to learne what to *fear*, what to *expect*, what to *pray against*, what to *strive after*, &c. And so consequently the handling of this question may bee exceedingly usefull to such an Assembly, as I am now called to speak to in the name of God.

God may go on to desolation.

This then is a second step that wee may know such things as may make us *fear* desolation, and consequently labour to prevent it, or prepare for it.

Thirdly, the maine question is to enquire what are the Tokens, the *gray haire*, the *flourishing of the Almond tree*, whereby wee may guesse at *mans going to his long home*.

And how it may be known.

I answer, Politicians, and some Divines will tell you of the fatall period of Kingdoms, that they have their youth, their strength, and after a time their declination; and shew by abundance of experience, that States seldom continue above five or six hundred years without some fatall change: But we must goe by a surer rule than this. It is not length of time, which makes God weary of shewing mercy; but, what *Solomon* saith of Kings, for the transgressions of a land many are the Princes thereof: so for the transgressions of a land, and the transgressions only, many are the ruines thereof. Now there is one rule which God hath alwayes proceeded by in the dissolution of Churches and Kingdoms ever since the beginning of the world, and that is this. That whensoever the sins of any Church, Nation, City, Family, or Person (you may take it as large or as narrow as you will) are come to a full measure, then God infallibly brings ruine upon them. This is the rule which

Prov. 28.

Fulnesse of sin the evidence of it.

*Nation
standing
reformation*

Gen. 15. 26.

I shall make plaine to you : God hath set severall vessels to limit the finnes of all Nations , beyond which they shall not goe ; as once God said to the waves of the Sea, *hitherto thou shalt goe , but here thy proud waves shall be staid* : so God hath said of the finnes of Nations, Families , Persons : thus farre I will forbear thee , but farther thy wickednesse shall not exceed ; then comes thy end . Take soure or five cleare evidences for it in the Scripture . First that speech of God to *Abraham* : I will give thy posterity all this land , but not yet , because *the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full* : though they were *Amorites* , God would beare with them , till their iniquities were come to the full , and then he would spare them no longer . Another is *Zachary* 5 . verse 6 . The prophet in a vision saw an *Ephah* , a thing like a bushell , and moreover the Lord told him , *this is the resemblance of the Ephah , throughout all the earth* : as if God should have said , this is not only proper to this people , but this rule I go by throughout the whole world : and what was that ? the *Ephah* is brought out , and into the *Ephah* is cast a *woman* ; this woman fate and filled the *Ephah* : then one brings a talent of lead for a cover to it , and that stops the mouth of it , and shuts the woman in ; then come two women with the wind in their wings , and they take up the *Ephah* and carry it between heaven and earth , and place it in the land of *Shinar* or *Babylon* , there to build it an house , and to set it upon its own base . Now what is the meaning of all this ? there is one word in the vision , which is a *key* to open this *lock* , viz. *this is wickednesse* : the meaning whereof is , That the Lord had brought the *Jewes* from the captivity of *Babylon* , where they had been

beene seventy yeeres: as soone as they came home, though they turned not to idolatry, yet they proved stark naught. God sets them their Ephah, puts their iniquity into a vessell, and doth (as it were) say, Go on, till yee have filled the Ephah; but as soone as that is full, I will clap a talent of lead in the mouth of it, I will take a course yee shall sinne no longer in this land, but will scatter you into *Mesopotamia*, into the land of *Shinar*, and there be as wicked as yee will. So you see when the measure is full, then vengeance comes.

Take another instance, in the first of *Iames* verse 15. *When lust hath conceived, it brings forth sinne; and sinne when it is finished, brings forth death*; which is of the same interpretation with the former, and shewes us sins progresse in the rising, reigning, and ruine. First a man hath *lust*, a wicked corrupt heart that hee brings into the world; every man comes into the world with a heart full of lust, now this lust brings forth iniquity; God leaves people to goe on in wickednesse, if they be not such as he means to save; and when their sinne is *perfected*, it brings forth death; when it comes to the full fourty weeks, and hath gone the full time, then comes destruction. Take yet two instances more, both in the fourteenth of the *Revelation* verse 14, &c. in the Parables of the vintage, and of the harvest; when they were ripe, then ruine comes. Till then God useth to beare with people: *smaller judgements* often come before sinne is ripe, and are removed againe; but when once the measure is full, then God saith, as in *Nahum* chap. 1. verse 6. *He will make an utter end, affliction shall not rise up the second time; hee will*

so

Notwith-
standing
Reforma-
tion

to doe it at once, that they shall not need to feare a second.

Why God
defers till
fin be full.

Esay 10.

Rom. 2.

4.5.

Now if by the way you desire to know why God defers so long, and rather cuts not off wicked men sooner. I answer, it should suffice us, that it is his *will* to do it; but further he doth it, partly that they may be for *exercise* to his people to *purge* and *humble* them, as *Asbur* was his rod to whip his people, before the rod was burnt. And partly to declare his long-suffering, and patience, thereby to leave them without excuse if they prove incorrigible. Thirdly, this is for salvation to some, who in the meane time are to be gathered in: and this I take it, the Apostle meanes, *2 Pet. 3.9.* when he saith, the Lord defers his comming to judgement, because the Nation of the Jews is first to be gathered in. So that as the Angel staid till *Lot* was plucked out of *Sodom*: so God hath some brands to snatch out of the fire, for whose sakes he defers the execution of vengeance against them, whose sins call for it. For these causes, and it may be others not known to us, but secret to himselfe, doth God deferre the full execution of his wrath till sinne be ripe.

How the
fulnesse of
a Peoples
sin may be
known.

What sins
are deso-
lating sins.

But how may wee judge when the sins of a people grow to the full? I answer (and but briefly, because I would not be burthensome to an attentive auditory; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak in the best;) to finde out sinnes fulnesse foure things must come into consideration. First, what kindes of sinnes they are which are land-destroying sinnes. Secondly, the *quantity* of these sinnes. Thirdly, the *aggravation* of them. Fourthly, which is the upshot of all, the *incorrigiblenesse* of them.

For

First, the kinds of them, I meane thus, there was never any Church or Nation without sinne, but all finnes are not Church-wasting finnes, nor Land-destroying sins; but there are sins which are called abominations, such as make a land spue out the inhabitants: such as make God drive them out: And they are some against the first Table, some against the second Table. Against the first Table, first, the sin of Idolatry. Evermore as Idols come in, God goes out: When there was an *image of jealousie set up, God goes farre from his Sanctuary*. God likes no such neighbours. When Ephraim offended in Baal, he dies for it: *when the meane man bowes himself, and the great man humbles himselfe* to stockes and stones, God will spare them no longer. When the glory due to Jehovah, is communicated to dumbe Idols, this God will bear at no peoples hand. And the reason is plaine, this is as the marriage bed to God, this provokes his jealousie, which is his rage, then *he will accept of no ransom*: This therefore is the *abomination that makes all desolation*.

God may goe
on to desola-

Idolatry.

Levit. 18. 28

Deut. 9. 5.

Ez k. 8.

Ezek. 43. 8.

Hof. 13.

Esay 2. 9.

Secondly, the sins of *prophaning, contemning, scornning and persecuting of Gods holy things, his holy day, his holy servants*. I joyne all these finnes together, because they come all from the same roote, that is, malignancy against God: God himselfe is prophaned, sleighted, contemned in all these. Thou hast *despised my holy things, and prophaned my Sabbaths*, therefore thou hast caused thy day to draw neere. God therefore would make Moab as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, because they reviled his people; but there is one prooffe may serve in stead of an hundred.

Prophanesse
and contempt
of Gods Or-
dinances, day,

Ez k. 22. 4. 3.

Zeph. 2. 9.

10.

Notwithstan-
ding reforma-
tion,

2 Chron. 36. The Lord did a long time beare with them, but when once they came to that passe they polluted his House, despised his Word, mocked his messengers, misused his Prophets, his wrath grew hot against them till there was no remedy. God could the beare them no longer, but utterly would destroy them. And it is our Country-man, *Venerable Bedes* observation, that when the old Britains grew to that height of sinne, as to cast *odium in religionis professores, tanquam in adversarios*, God presently sent in the Saxons, who destroyed them all.

Sins destru-
ctive to hu-
mane society.

Gen. 6. 11.
Jon. 3. 8.
Ezek. 22. 3. 4.
6. 9. 12.
Hos. 12. 7.
Hos. 4. 2.
Sensuall lusts
of drunken-
nesse and un-
cleannesse.

Hos. 6. 10.

Hos. 4. 2. 11.

There are also some finnes against the second Table which greatly helpe to fill the measure of a peoples iniquity: As first, such finnes as are destructive to humane society, cruelty, bloud, oppression, deceit, these were the finnes which brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly. These are the sins which the King of *Nineveh* saw would ruine him and his Kingdome.

Secondly, the sensuall lusts of drunkennesse and whoredome; I joine these finnes together, because they are usually joined in Scripture, and severed in mens practice: And you shall cleerly in the search of the Scripture finde them to be among the abominations which helpe to fill up the measure of a peoples sin, and prepares them for judgement. *I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel* (saith God, speaking of the finnes which made God hew them downe) *there is the whoredome of Ephraim; whoredome and wine, and new wine take away their heart*: This was one of the things that made God have controversie with the land to make it mourne, and to take them all away

way. I have not time to prosecute these things, you shall easily finde that these are gray haire in any Nation where ever they are found

God may go on to desolation.

Secondly, the quantity of these sinnes is very considerable, when they are universall, no Nation ever was without them, but when once they come to spread as a Gangrene over the whole body, then the measure quickly growes full: When all flesh had corrupted their wayes, then the flood came rushing in: When *from the crowne of the head, to the sole of the foot, the whole body was full of wounds, and bruses, and putrified sores*, then it was to no purpose for God to strike them any more with any hope of healing.

Esay 18.1.3. ver.7.8.

The generality of these sins.

Gen.6.12.

Esay 1.5,6.

You shall finde in the 24. of *Ezekiel*, a notable description of Jerusalems condition when *Nebuchadnezzar* came to destroy them, the Prophet compares the City to a great pot, whereinto all the choice peeces were put to bee boiled, the thigh and the shoulder, and all the choice bones, but they were all rotten flesh whose scumme would not boile out, meaning, that the Princes and Rulers, Prophets and Priests and People were all over-spread with abominable wickednesses. So in the 22. of *Ezekiel*, all states are brought in, the Prophets devouring soules, the Priests violating the Law, prophaning holy things, Princes and Rulers oppressing, the people robbing, &c. then God powres out his indignation, and consumes them with the fire of his wrath:

Verf.1,2,3,4.

Verf.15.&c.

But this must be understood with this caution, that when I say all, it is not to be understood, as if God would spare a people untill the whole multitude grew wicked, and none remaining on his side:

Yet to be understood with a caution.

Notwithstan-
ding reforma-
tion.

God had seven thousand in Israel who were faith-
full to him in the worst time of *Ahabs* apostacy; but
the meaning is, when the number of such as abstain
from these abominations, is so small, that they are
not considerable, to God they are alwaies conside-
rable, but not alwaies considerable as to the turning
away of judgement, or to the preventing of ruine.
Ten righteous men would have been considerable
in Sodom for the sparing of it, when five would
not. So the sum is, that when these abominations
are generally spread, and very few in comparision
abstaining from them, a people growes ripe apace
for destruction.

The aggrava-
tion of these
sins.

Din. 9. 12.
This is the
very argument
of the whole
Chapter of
the second of
Jeremy. See al
so Mic. 1. 5.

3. The third thing considerable, is the aggrava-
tion of these sinnes, and therein I shall only give
this one brieft rule, that in all places and Countries,
houses, families, or persons, the more mercy, light
and meanes these sinnes are committed against, the
sooner is the vessel of their iniquity come to the
full. Amos 3. 2. *You onely have I knowne of all the
Nations of the world, and therefore I will visite you for
all your iniquities, Ezek. 9. God begins at his sanctua-
ry, and visit the ancient men, who had stood longest
before him. And Daniel makes this the reason why
God brought a greater evill upon them than upon
any other Nation, because no other Nation had
enjoyed the like meanes to keep them from sinne,
or to bring them to repentance. And in the 22. of
Esay. The valley of vision had the greatest bur-
then of wrath of all others; that is, the people of
Israel, to whom God had sent all his Prophets
from time to time. And there is great reason why
sinnes against light and covenants, mercies and*
Con-

Conscience should be most provoking; It is thus even amongst all ingenuous men, he that eateth my bread, (saith David, hath lift up his heele against mee, if it had been a stranger, I could have borne it: Is this thy kindnesse to thy friend, could unnaturall Absolon say to Hulhai? This then is a plaine case, that the more mercies a people sinne against, the greater is their sin, and the sooner comes their judgement.

God may grow on
to desolation.

Psal. 41. 9.

2. Sam. 16. 17.

4. The last thing considerable to finde out the fulnesse of sinne, is the *Incorrigiblenesse* of it, and if the Lord grant that we can quit our selves of this, we shall yet doe well: by this *Incorrigiblenesse*, I meane, when the sinnes of a people are growne so great, that they are too strong for the mounds and bankes which God hath set to keep them in compassse. Now God hath set Foure Boundaries for sinne, and when sin is growne too strong for all these, you may conclude that (reserving or excepting what God may doe in his absolute prerogative) if he goe by his wonted rules, that Nation is going to her long home.

Incorrigible-
nesse of these
sins, when
they are too
strong for

First, God hath set *Conscience* and *shame* to be boundaries among all people, to keep sin in compassse: Conscience to make them stand in awe of God: shame to make them stand in feare of men: These two God hath set up (as his Officers and heraulds) in all mens hearts; and when once men can run into sin, as the horse into the battell, rejoycing to doe evill, proclaiming their sins as Sodom, not being ashamed, and past all feeling, there is one bank broken downe, one Boundary plucked up.

Conscience
and shame.

Prov. 2. 14.

Ez. 3. 9.

Secondly, another bank that God hath set, is

Notwithstanding reformation.

For prayers examples & counsell of the godly.

Job 22 ult.

Esa. 57. 1.
Gen. 19.

18. Gen. 33.
Jer. 14 11.

For Magistrates and Ministers, which comes to passe either,



When they take part with it,

the *example*, and *conversation*, and *prayers* of his *owne people*, whom he scatters here and there amongst men, and great is the power and force of their presence to keep sinne in compasse, partly by the *Majestie* of the *Image of God*, shining in them, partly by their *holy examples*, partly by their *wise and seasonable counsell*, *admonitions* *reprehensions* partly by their *prayers*, whereby they bring downe *restraining and constraining grace*: Now when these are either *taken away* from a place by *death* or *driven away by persecution*, as *Lot* out of *Sodom*, or living amongst them, God takes off their edge to pray no longer, as *Abraham* for *Sodom*, or *Ieremy* for the *Iewes*: There is a second Boundary pulled up.

The third is, that of *Magistrates* and *Ministers*, whom God hath invested with his owne authoritie, and put upon them some beames of his owne *Majestie* and *Image*, put his sword into their hands, and armes them with power to keep sin in, and beat it downe; The *Magistrate* having the sword of *Iustice*, and thereby being made *custos utriusque tabulae*; and *Ministers* having the sword of the *Spirit*, these two are strong Rampires, and Banks, they are the *ῥυπαὶ καὶ τείχεα* to hinder sinnes course, they are Physitians to the hurts of Gods people, and when once the sins of a Land grow too strong for these, farewell all, you will soone heare the daies of their visitation are at hand. And this is done in three Cases.

First, when *Magistrates* and *Ministers* take sinnes part, and in stead of joyning with God against sin, they joyne with sin against God: as if the *dogges* should joyne with the *wolves* against

gainst the sheep, and the Shepheards.

God may goe
on to desolati-
on.

Thus it was in *Ieremies* time, he found the people harder than a rock to be wrought upon, but he said, Surely these are poore and foolish, who know not the way of the Lord. I will get me to the great men, and I will speake to them, for they have knowne the way of the Lord, and the judgement of their God; but were they such, or did they so? marke what follows, these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bands, in stead of maintaining Gods yoke, and strengthening Gods hands, they broke them a pieces: and what followes, therefore a Lyon out of the Forrest shall slay them, an evening Wolfe shall spoile them, a Leopard shall watch over the cities, every one that goes out shall be torne in pieces. Thus it was likewise in *Hoseas* time, when the Prophet was a foole, and the spirituall man was mad when the Princes would be drunke with bottles of wine, &c. Thus it was in *Ezekiels* time (as Ezek. 22. 15. was before touched) immediately before their desolation. &c.

Secondly, when *Magistrates* or *Ministers* are dastardly, when they are affraid of sin and sinners, and dare not appeare for God, when such men have God Conscience, their office, the lawes, all on their side, and yet dare not appeare against Idolatry, prophanesse, violence, sensuality, as it shoves the men to be of a base spirit, so it argues the sins of that place to be of great strength, even fit for judgement. Thus it was in the 22. of *Ezekiel*, verse. 30. when all such were growne corrupt, I sought for a man among them, that is some Phinehas to stand in the gap, to make up the hedge, some zealous Ministers

to

O: dare not
oppose it.

Notwithstand
ing reformatio

See also Jer
5.1.

Or doing
their duty
cannot yet
prevaile
against it.

And for the
judgements
of God.

Zech. 3. 6 7.

Amos 4.

to stand up and mediate with God for them, and testifie in their ministry against them, *but I found none, and ther efore I powred out my indignation upon them.*

Thirdly, in case any *Magistrates* or *Ministers* doe appeare on Gods part, as *Iosiah*, *Jeremiah*, and others did in these forlorne times, yet they prove too weake stakes, they are able to doe nothing; the inundation of wickednesse beares them downe, and runs over their heads: In a word, when some Magistrates take part with sinne, others afraid of it, and the remainder, who are faithfull can prevaile nothing, this Rampire is likewise overthrowne.

4. There is but one more, which when it is likewise cast downe, destruction is at the very doore, and that is, Gods lesser judgements: God sometimes keepes petty-seissions, to prevent great *Affizes*, inferior executions, to prevent utter desolations, which when they prevaile not, it is a certaine token of extreame wrath. Sometimes God *afflicts neighbour Nations*, destroying their *Cities*, that the rest might receive *Instruction*, and their dwelling not be cut off: As Judges will hang up a thiefe upon a Gibbet, to keepe others from the gallowes. *I have overthrowne some of you* (saith God) *as Sodom*, *I have smitten you with blasting and mildew*, *I have sent among you the pestilence*, yet yee have not turned to me, why should ye be smitten any more? You shall see this notably exprest in the 24. of *Ezekiel*. Where God compares *Ierusalem* to a pot, and all the Inhabitants to flesh boyling in the pot, but all the boyling would not fetch out their scum,

no

no threatnings, no visitations, no inferiour Judgements could prevaile with them, but still their scumme, their blood, their filthinesse and lewdnesse abode in them; marke then in the 13. v. what doome God gives of them, *because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged*, I have tryed all means to doe thee good, and thou wilt not bee reformed, *thou shalt neuer be purged from thy filthines any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee, I the Lord have spoken it, and I will doe it.* And that example in the sixth of *Jeremy*, is most remarkable, where God useth such a parable as this, *the bellowes are burnt, the lead is melted in the fire, the foundler workes in vaine, for the wicked are not taken away. reprobate silver shal men call them, for the Lord hath rejected them.* God here compares himselfe to a Silver-smith, who takes a piece of oare, and tryes all his art to divide betwixt the drosse and the metall, but cannot doe it, and at last throwes it away with indignation, saith it is base stuffe, on which hee will never bestow any more labour. So God seems to say, my Ministers have spent their lungs, dried up their throats, all my other judgements have been tryed, but the wicked are not taken away, they are all base drosse, I will bestow no more paines upon them.

And now you understand what the gray hairs of a State or people are, and when a people are ripe for destruction, when the time is come that *God will passe them no more*, you shall not need to enquire by what meanes he will doe it, he hath all in his owne hands, he hath famine, and pestilence, and sword, & wilde beasts, and fire, and earthquakes, & if none of

G

all

Notwithstanding reformation, all these doe it, hee hath *flies*, and *lice*, and *grasshoppers*, & *rats*, and *mice* enough to destroy the strongest Kingdome in the world in a moment; if hee but whistle, hissle, or call for them.

What kind of Reformation may meet with desolation.

Objection. It is true may some say, if people goe on in their wickednesse, and prove Incorrigible, no marvaile though God proceed thus against them: but that it should be the case of a people, who set upon Reformation, this is strange: And how wil this stand with the doctrine preached in the forenoon, that *when a nation repents, God wil repent, &c.*

Ier. 18. 7. 8.

Answer. In such an assembly as this, a short answer (if true) will satisfie. First, God never promised that the sincere Reformation of a few should prevent the judgement of a multitude: if Gods time of Execution be come, *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Iob* shall deliver neither son, nor daughter, who are not turned home to God. Secondly, I answer, that though the Nation joyned in the Reformation, it was not in *sincerity*, if it had been sound, the doctrine in the morning would have carried it away, and I must have had another Interpretation of my Text. It is true, *Iosiah* carried it by his authoritie, but the peoples hearts were not *right*. And *Jeremy* saith no lesse, when I removed *Samaris* out of my sight, *her treacherous sister Iudis* turned not to mee. Yes might the people say, wee did turne to thee under good King *Iosiah*, but it was but *fainedly*. (saith the Prophet) and it appears to be so, for as soone as ever *Iosiah* was dead, they made a *universall Apostacie from the Lord*, and so their Reformation was but like that of the Nation of the *Iews in Christs time*, which our Lord com-

Ezek 4.

Ier. 3. 10.

Matt. 12. 43.
44, 45.

compares to the unclean spirit, going out for a while, and returning againe with seven Devils worse then himselfe. As if *England* by the help of this noble Parliament, who lay the cause of God to heart, should joine in a reformation, though against the haire, it would come to nothing in the end. And so I have in some measure cleered this doctrine in *Thesi*, how far the approaching ruine of a Nation may be knowne, and what the signes of it are. The second followes, and that is;

God may go on to desolation.

Whether this concerne us. And what answer would you have me give you? I could willingly answer in this, as *Daniel* did *Nebuchadnezzar*, when he was to interpret a dreame to the King, which in the true exposition foretold *Nebuchadnezzars* fall: It is said *Daniel* stood still for an hour, and his thoughts troubled him, and in the end speakes out, *My Lord, the dreame be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation of it to thine enemies.* So say I, Oh let the parallell of this be some other people: Oh that it might not fit *England*, but doth it fit it? Right honourable and beloved, your great wisdomes, your diligent inspection, your ample intelligence, your faithfulness and sincerity makes you better able to judge, then my meanness can attaine unto, who am none of the wisest observers of the time; but I must speake, and what I speake, I shall speake freely and humbly, I would I could speake sorrowfully: I know I speake to wise men, who can well judge what I say.

Whether this may be thought to bee our own case.

Dan. 4 19.

First, I hope verily we are *not yet* come to that passe that God should say of us, I will passe by *England* no more; blessed bee God, wee have a

It is hoped that we are not yet in that condition.

Notwithstan-
ding reformation.

And why.

gracious King, many Noble Peeres, many excellent Commons, who have already done great things for God; I need not repeat them, all the Kingdome knowes them to their comfort. Yea, and blessed be God, the same gracious Sovereigne and Honourable Assembly of Parliament doe yet enquire what is further to be done, what wrath is kindled, and how it may bee quenched, and have called the whole Kingdome, to afflict themselves before God, that his great wrath might bee turned away from us. And as yet wee have a sprinkling of *Phineazzes*, worthy Magistrates, who in their severall Countries and Counties dare appeare in Gods cause against sinne, and the bold-est sinners. And wee have also a good sprinkling of faithfull Ministers, who *stand on the Watch towre, and blow the Trumpet, and give the people warning.* And for ever blessed be the Lord (which is not the least pledge of our hopes, for the lengthning out of our tranquility) we have many ten thousand Saints in England, who not onely abstaine from the abomination of the times, but mourne for them, and give God no rest night nor day, untill hee bow the heavens and come downe, and set up for himselfe a glorious Throne amongst us: And unto these God hath made many promises of sparing the land for their sakes, and that their posterities after them shall be blessed.

Yet feared
what we are
very neare it.

But as I hope this, so the Lord will bee a witnesse with me, that I feare whether *all these persons, and their graces* doe beare a *just proportion* to the *meanes and mercies*, which God hath given to *England*; or to that *huge Inundation of sinne*, wherewith
Eng-

England is over-run at this day. And here, had I a tongue to speake, and you and I hearts and eyes to powre out teares and sorrow, wee might make this place a *Bochim* a plate of weepers. For, what kinde of these sins doe not overflow us? You will say at first, not Idolatry; but I tell you, neither were the *Germanes* carried away with Idolatry, when their desolations broke in upon them; nor the *Jewes*, before their last destruction. The measure of our Iniquity may possibly be full, though this sin come not in; but God knowes, and you know that we have not onely abundance of Idolatrous Papists, who are proud, insolent and daring, but abundance of Popish Idolatrous spirits, superstitiously addicted, willing to embrace any thing that goes that way, onely they will not have it goe under the name of Popery. And for the other sinnes of contempt of Gods holy Ordinances, his day, his servants, and all his wayes, oppression, cruelty, defrauding of brethren, the sensuall sinnes of uncleannesse, especially that of drunkennesse; Goe but to the places of greatest resorts, Market-Townes, populous Cities, and Fayres, &c. and your hearts would tremble to thinke, how our Land is overspread with these: Oh Beloved, the generality of the people of *England*, is extreemly wicked, and which argues our case to bee most miserable, it seemes to beare downe, and to break over all our Bankes, multitudes sinning with a whores forehead, proclaiming their sinnes as *Sodom*: And the *vox populi* is; that many of the Nobles, Magistrates, Knights and Gentlemen, and persons of great Quality are arrand Traytors and Rebels a-

God may goe on to desolation.

because all these sinnes are found amongst us.

And that in great measure, which prevails

over Magistrates.

Notwithstanding reformation.

Ministers.

And the very judgements.

gainst God, taking part with wicked men, and wicked causes against the Truth, Patrons of Ale-houses and disorders, checking inferiour Officers, who discover any zeal for God against an ill cause: That in many of their families (not to mention Religion) there is not so much as a face of Civility: Many others of them, who seem to wish well, dare not draw out the sword which God hath given them, and some few others borne downe in their places with the torrent of wickednesse. And as for our Ministers, how many sad complaints and petitions hath this Honourable Assembly received against many hundreds of them? multitudes of them rotten and unsound in their doctrine, and so virious and corrupt in their lives, that they fulfill that which Archbishop *Abbot* said in his *Lectures* upon *Jonah*, professing that his heart bled within him, to thinke of the miserable condition of the precious soules of many people who had such Ministers, as *Iohannes Aventinums* speakes of, who (if they were not in the Ministry) would not bee thought fit hog-heards to keepe swine. Besides thousands of others, who (God knowes) want either will or skill to doe the Lords worke faithfully. And the residue who have endeavoured to give the people warning, and to teach them the good way of the Lord, have been a long time borne downe and opposed as the troublers of our *Israel*. Sure I am, what ever our Ministers are, or doe, the sins of the land are too strong for them, and our people remaine unsubdued to *Iesus Christ*.

Yea which is yet worse, the very judgements of God have wrought little upon us, all the long and hea-

heavy pressures of the Neighbour Churches, his rods upon our selves, terrible and wasting pestilences and famine, his blasting all our enterprises, his scaring us with rumors of warres and blood: prevaile nothing; wee still grow worse and worse: Indeed if any sin grow out of fashion, (as cloathes doe) then wee leave it, otherwise wee goe on boldly and impudently, let God threaten or doe what he will. And all these evils are aggravated by being committed against greater meanes and mercies, than any nation under Heaven enjoys this day besides our selves.

God may go on
to desolation.

and mercies of
God.

And which is yet sadder, (oh that I were mistaken upon condition I were tyed to a recantation) our dealing *this last year* is more injurious against God, than heretofore. The Lord hath gathered such an Assembly of Noble Peeres and Commons, who have done such great things, that many of us began to hope our Pilgrimage through this wilderness had beene almost ended, and that *England* would now turne to the Lord, and become a people zealous of good workes: But verily so far as I can understand, the body of the Nation makes little other use of all the mercies of this last yeare, but to abuse all the liberties procured both for Church and Common wealth, to greater and bolder sinning against God: and now also, which yet speakes more sadly, the Lord God beginnes to appeare against us, not onely in permitting many *unexpected blocks* and *rubbs*, huge trees cast in the way of our Worthies that they cannot march on in their strength, and so the much *expected Reformation* stickes long in the birth; but God hath drawne out, and fourbished the

And God be-
gins to ap-
peare against
us.

and wherein;

Notwithstan-
ding reforma-
tion.

the sword, and made it begin to drinke blood in the Neighbour Nation, which when it once begins to drinke, seldome is put up againe, till it bee drunke with blood: this God hath suffered to bee drawne out upon our deare brethren in Ireland, upon our owne flesh and blood, and that by a Nation, by whom (though they may seeme contemptible to some, as being barbarous, unarmed, &c. yet) wee may feare that God will plague us, because wee have not laboured to bring them to the knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. *Mene tekel.* The Lord grant that being put into the ballance we be not found too light.

Application to
our selves.

First, to be-
leeve that we
are in danger,

1 King 22.
Which we are
loath to doe.

What shall wee doe then? First beleeve it, *not that England shall be ruined*; I say not so: but beleeve that great is the wrath of God which is kindled against us, that wee stand upon ill termes before him; that though he may save us by his Prerogative, yet if hee proceed with us at common Law, according to his usuall rule with other Nations, wee are in great danger to be utterly lost. I presse this the rather, because we are a secure nation, not willing to beleeve any thing that may disturbe our ease. One *Zedekiah* who will preach pleasing things, shall bee beleaved more then twenty *Micaiahs*: such as tell us wee are the most flourishing Church in the world, the strongest people by Sea and Land, all other Nations court us, and have their owne hands full, the Irish be onely discontented, weake men, and will soone be quieted: such I say shall be beleaved more then an hundred *Ieremies*, who would put us in feare. It is reported that *Honorius* the Emperour lying at his pleasure at *Ravenna*,

venna,

venna, when newes was brought him that *Rome* was taken and
spoyled, hee thought they had meant a fighting Cock
which he called *Rome* : so when we are told of danger, wee
flight all that is spoken, & believe nothing in that kind: But
the Lord grant that this security of ours bee not a *Calme* be-
fore an earthquake: *When they say peace, peace, then sudden de-*
struction comes upon them. But let us believe and tremble : the
Wise man never hides himself till he sees the evill comming ; and
the first step to *Ninevehs* peace was their believing that God
was comming against them.

God may
go on to
desolation.

1 Thes. 5. 3.
Prov. 2. 3.
10. 3. 5.

But you will say that is the way to discourage men, & you
do not well to discourage thē in whose hand & courage our
welfare lyes. Oh beloved, let me not be so interpreted; were
this objection fit in other cases? suppose one should come
and truly tell us the *enemy* were landed, the *Sea* were broke in,
the *House* or *City*, were on fire, were it fit to object, oh say not
so, you will discourage men? Discourage or not discourage,
if this be not told, how shall the enemy be driven back, the
breach of waters stopped, or the fire quenched? But neither
need this discourage, but rather furnish us with matter of
humiliation & action. *Iosiah* sate down and wept, when he un-
derstood Gods wrath was kindled, & fell to reformation. *Ezra*
rent his garment and plucked off his haire, and fell to his work, &
so let us do : Let us believe that Gods displeasure is against
us, that we may feare before this Great God, and labour to
get his wrath turned quite away; & that is the second Use.

But till we
doe it our
danger en-
creases :

And wee
shal never
use the
right means
for life.
2 Kings 22.

2 Let us all labour in the right way to turn this wrath of
God from us, & that, First, by mourning under it; God looks
we should be ashamed when he spits in our face, and takes it
wonderfull unkindly, if we tremble not when this *Lion* roares.
Consider seriously of that place, *Esay* 22. There you shal see
an enemy was comming against *Ierusalem* & God was much
displeased, because they took not the right way for their safe-
ty, and so ill that he said that iniquity should never be purged
from thē till they dyed, & yet see what they did, they scoured

17. 6.
To pre-
vent it.
First by
mourning
for it.
Neh. 12. 14
Ages 2.
u 9 &c.

Notwith-
standing
reformati-
on.

up their armour, they gathered the waters, that the enemy might have no benefit by them, they repaired the breaches in the wals, made a deep ditch for greater fortification: what hurt was there in all this? Oh but they begun at the wrong end: the Lord called them to weeping and mourning, and to baldnes, and to girding with sackcloth, to tremble before him because of his wrath, and this they regarded nor, and therefore God would never pardon it. Till therefore we mourn because of Gods displeasure, all other meanes of welfare will faile of that comfortable effect which we desire. I know the world makes a scorn of this, you are one of the mourners, but let our soules be numbred among those mourners; God will restore comfort to these mourners: and no man knows the power which these poore mourners have to turne away Gods wrath.

By p^{ro}-
nall refo-
mation.

Secondly, and as we must mourn for this fulnesse of our sinnes, so every one must help to empty the vessel, as we have helped to fill it: the fuller our vessel is with sin, the neerer our ruine is, & if we could knock out the bottom of the vessel, or by any meanes empty it, Gods wrath would passe away with our sins: oh help to empty it, your Atheisme, your prophane-nesse, your opposing of good men, & good causes, your adulteries, lies, &c. get them out by all meanes; all Gods threatenings speak to us, as the waves of the Sea seemed to speak to the Mariners in the first of *Jonah*. *Jonah* had told them that the tempest came for him, and till he was cast over the sea would never be quiet, yet they rowed hard to carry *Jonah* to land, but the waves seemed to tell them, cast *Jonah* over board, or we wil fetch you over-board. Out therefore with your lusts, God hath no other quarrell against us, he doth not afflict us willingly, he saith to us as *Isaac* said to the wife woman of *Abel*, farre be it from me to swallow up or destroy a City in *Israel* deliver only *Sheba the Son of Bichri*, or throw his head over the wall, and I am gone. Do thou so, finde out all thy beloved sins, say to thy darling lust, as *Iunius Brutus* said to his son, thou villain, shal I nourish thee to destroy the Common-wealth? & stabs him:

2. SAMI, 21.
10.

him: shal I walk in these wayes, to be the ruine of the Church and Common-wealth? the Lord rather strike me dead with a Thunderbolt. Let us therefore every one, begin to sweep before our own door, and we know not how soon the whole street may be made cleane.

God way go
on to de-
olation.

Thirdly and lastly (right Honourable & Beloved) you are to be our Physicians, and repairers of our breaches; the horns of Gods wrath begin to push at us; you are the Carpenters that must cut off these horns: I therefore make this humble suit to you, that (as you have besought his Ma^{tie} to call a day of Fasting and Prayer throughout *England*, and we hope we shall have many more, till the fierce wrath of God be turned away) so in all your thoughts to do *England, Scotland & Ireland* good, you would set down this, that the turning away of Gods wrath is of greatest consequence: if you let God go on to be angry, do what you can we shall lose all at home and abroad. Thus did *Iosiah*, when once he understood out of the Book of God, that the *Lords wrath* was kindled, he presently sends to *Hulda* the Prophetesse, to enquire what was to be done that they might quench it, esteeming all other busines unseasonable and fruitless, while that fire was burning. And here I shall only in a few words commend to you the example and practice of this brave King, whom this Text so magnifies. 1. He *mourns*, and calls all the people to mourn with him: and that through Gods mercy you have done. 2. He goes out in that way, whereof you heard more in the forenoon, & breaking down all the *Images and relicks of Idolatry*: the Lord set it close to your hearts, that you may leave nothing which is contrary to Gods pure worship. 3. He *executed the justice and vengeance of God upon the Instruments of the kingdoms ruine, the idolatrous Priests, digging the very bones of some of them out of their graves*: the same Lord direct you, that in your great wisdomes you may be as the Angels of God, to discern what is to be done with them who have been the troublers of our peace, & the greatest kindlers of Gods

What the
Parlia-
ment
should do
for our
safety.

Following
Iosiah's ex-
ample.

1. In mour-
ning, be-
cause of
Gods
wrath.
2 *King-23.*
11, &c.
2 Rooting
out idolat-
ry, &c.
3 In execu-
tion of
Gods ven-
geance
upon his
enemies.

Notwith-
standing
Reforma-
tion

1 Kin. 20. 42
4. In setting
up and
maintain-
ing Gods
true Reli-
gion and
Worship.
2 Kin 13.
10, &c.

Exactly,
according
to the
Word.

And that
with all
their
strength.

Encou-
ragement
thereunto.
Job 21.
Esay 58. 8.

wrath against us: spare whom ye may spare with Gods good will; but remember, it is foolish pity that destroyes a City: let not the men escape, whom God appoints out to punishment. 4. He resolves to reform Religion, and the worship of God, and to set it up, and maintain it according to the word: and to that end he calls together the Priests, and Prophets, the Elders of Judah and Ierusalem, & with them enters into a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, &c. O that the Lord would put it into the heart of you all to do the same; you know what you have bin often petitioned for, the God of all wisdom direct you in due time to proceed in this cause, and if in your wilddomes you shall find it fitting that a grave Synod of Divines should be called, to inform your consciences what is to be done, I beseech you follow the direction of Gods word in it. Fifthly, And then for the manner. Hee did all according to Gods law, he consulted not with flesh and blood, enquired not into terms of policy, how far the state would bear it, or how far the people would concur without grumbling: but did according to all which God had appointed in his word. And lastly, he did it with zeal and fervency, he laid not out his strength in his own cause, & then use diversions and diminutions in Gods cause; but there was his strength laid out, where he knew Gods iea-lousie lay. The Lord make you such Iosiahs, such zealous men, what Anakims or Gyants would you prove; you might (with Briareus the Gyant with 100 hands, of whom the Poets feign) take thunder-bolts out of the hand of God, and so save your selves, your families, and the Nation. Go on, ye worthies of the Lord, and thus deliver us. If there be any healing, any deliverance, you shall be our Saviours; if there be none, you may with Iosiah get the iudgment respited for your life time: let the worst come, the glory of the Lord shall not only be your reward, but your reward, your safety: you shall deliver your soules, and your children after you shall be blessed. Do this, and the Lord God be with you.

FINIS.

